



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
PO BOX 369
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

FRED M. JACOBS, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

To: Health Officers
From: Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D.
West Nile Virus Coordinator/ Director of Data Systems
Communicable Disease Service
Date: April 9, 2007
Subject: Bird testing for WNV Surveillance

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation and support during the 2006 WNV season. As in previous years, we need to continue surveillance efforts to ensure the safety and protection of our residents. The following are some reminders, and general information to enhance communication and reporting.

Bird Testing and Reporting

The West Nile Virus Working Group recommended bird testing to begin as usual in mid April. We will continue to expand bird testing to the entire corvid family. The most common corvids found in NJ are crows and blue jays. Additional information on corvid species, including pictures, can be found at the following websites –

<http://www.montereybay.com/creagrus/corvids.html>

<http://www.shades-of-night.com/aviary/corvidae.html>

We will start bird testing on **April 16, 2007** and will determine an end date based on how the season progresses. As in previous years, the 5 positive birds per municipality limit policy will remain in effect. However, birds from new areas within a large municipality with 5 positives may still be submitted for testing; please indicate on the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission that the specimen is from a "New Area".

Please do advise residents to use gloves while handling dead corvids.

There is no change in the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission forms this year. You can continue to use forms from 2004.

Please note that Dead/Ill Bird Reports for birds not submitted for testing still need to be entered into the system as bird reports, or sent to DHSS via fax at 609-588-2546. These are reported as "sightings". These data are crucial to enable prompt mosquito control and surveillance efforts on the local level, as dead crows are excellent early indicators of WNV activity in a locale.

If residents have questions regarding avian influenza and handling dead birds, please refer them to the guidelines posted on the state health website

<http://nj.gov/health/er/avianflu.shtml>, especially the document [Public Reports of Bird Mortality: Guidance for Health Officers](#)

Positive Bird Notifications

As in previous years, we will continue to send email updates listing WNV positive birds and mosquito pools twice a week. However, in the beginning of the season, these updates will be sent only when positive birds and mosquito pools are reported.

Courier Service

Currently NJDHSS is providing limited courier service for specimen delivery to PHEL. Attached is a list of counties currently served by the NJDHSS courier. In addition Atlantic, Ocean and Morris counties are served by the Lawyer Courier Service under contract by NJDHSS. Beginning July 1, 2007, NJDHSS will have a new courier service contract in place. There will be no supplemental courier service provided by Rutgers University, for WNV specimens this season.

For those dropping off samples themselves, please note there is a single point access for specimen delivery to the laboratory at the loading dock entrance, after clearance by the security booth. The Greenhouse entrance will no longer be open. The security office at the loading dock will now serve as the final security clearance for all specimen delivery. There will be assigned, posted parking for sample delivery vehicles in the loading dock area. SPECIMEN DELIVERY HOURS WILL BE 8:30 AM TO 4 PM.

Instructions for bird submissions

- Pack birds in clear ziploc bags with completed Avian submission forms.
- As all counties are generating their own USIs please make sure you write them with a waterproof marker on the bird bag so that the bird can be traced even if the form is lost.
- All 2007 USIs start with 'A07' (see picture below).
- Refrigerate bird – do not freeze
- Only use ice packs (not dry ice) for packing. Do not put the ice in the bird bag.
- Before submitting, open mouth to check for maggots (even refrigerated birds can develop maggots). Do not submit birds with maggots. Please use puncture resistant gloves while handling dead birds.



Forms and protocols on the web

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm>

Thanks again for your help and cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.